

Donnie Moscow

Report

The true story of Donald Trump's ties with the Russian mob and money laundering

Version 1.1

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Donald J. Trump ✓
@realDonaldTrump



Russia has never tried to use leverage over me. I HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH RUSSIA - NO DEALS, NO LOANS, NO NOTHING!

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1980s

- **1984:** Russian mobster **David Bogatin** shows up and drops [\\$6 million in cash for 5 condos in Trump Tower](#) (some reports say it was 6 condos). Trump [attends](#) the closing personally.

Who is David Bogatin?

- Bogatin is connected to “boss of bosses” **Semion Mogilevich**, who in 2009 makes the [FBI's 10 Most-Wanted List](#). Mogilevich is described as a "global con artist and ruthless criminal" charged with more than 40 counts of racketeering, wire fraud, mail fraud, money laundering, and other economic crimes. He is also wanted for his alleged participation in a multi-million dollar scheme to defraud investors in YBM Magnex International (a company he controlled) to the tune of \$150 million. Mogilevich's money laundering network involved 27 nations around the world. Open-source reporting shows him to also be involved in weapons trafficking, contract murders, extortion, drug trafficking, and prostitution on an international scale.
- 1987: Bogatin [pleads guilty](#) to “evading millions of dollars in state fuel taxes in what state officials called one of the largest gasoline bootlegging operations in the nation.”
- All five of his Trump Tower condos are seized by the government on the grounds that he used the purchase to launder money and shelter and hide assets.
- A spokesman for the NY State Attorney General is [quoted](#) as saying that Bogatin was "part of a cartel of dishonest gas distributors that prosecutors believe operated under the direction of Michael Franzese, a reputed captain of the Columbo organized-crime family". For further context, John "Sonny" Franzese, Michael's father, was [Colombo family underboss](#).
- Bogatin eventually skips bail and flees the country.
- 1992: Bogatin is arrested in Poland and he becomes the first person ever to be [extradited](#) under the terms of a 1927 treaty between Poland and the US. He was subsequently [sentenced](#) to state prison and ordered to pay a \$3.1 million in restitutions and fines.
- 1996: Colombo mobster Michael Franzese [testifies](#) before a Senate subcommittee and confirms that David Bogatin was in a leadership position in Russian organized crime, with about 200 Russians working for him in various capacities. He also confirms that Bogatin was working with the Colombo crime family.
- **1987:** [Trump visits Moscow for the first time](#) and begins pursuing his vision to put a Trump-brand luxury hotel “[across the street from the Kremlin](#)”.

1990s

- **1990:** Trump is holding [\\$3.4 billion in debt](#), including \$1.3 billion on the casinos and \$830 million in loans personally guaranteed by Trump. Regulators warned that “the possibility of a complete financial collapse of the Trump Organization was not out of the question.”
- **1991:** just over a year after it opened, Trump's Taj Mahal is in bankruptcy; the casino owes \$69.5 million to 253 contractors who helped build it.

- **1992:** the Plaza Hotel and the Castle are both now in bankruptcy.
- Russian mobster **Vyacheslav Ivankov** comes to New York after Semion Mogilevich reportedly [bribes a Russian judge](#) to spring him from a Siberian gulag.

Who is Vyacheslav Ivankov?

- [Ivankov](#) is part of the Mogilevich syndicate.
 - 1982: Ivankov is [convicted](#) on charges of robbery, firearms possession, forgery and drug trafficking and sentenced to 14 years in prison in Siberia.
 - 1991: Ivankov is released from prison early.
 - 1992: Ivankov [fraudulently obtains a visa](#) to enter the US, comes to New York, and buys a condo at Trump Tower.
 - According to [reports](#), Ivankov makes frequent visits to Trump's Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. According to [federal authorities](#), casinos are frequently used for laundering huge sums of money.
 - 1995: Ivankov is [arrested](#) by the FBI for being the ringleader of an extortion plot in which two businessmen were kidnapped at gunpoint from a Manhattan hotel, and a father of one of the men was murdered in Moscow.
 - 2009, after being extradited to Russia to face murder charges, Ivankov is [gunned down](#) in a sniper attack on the streets of Moscow.
- **1995:** Trump claims a [\\$916 million loss](#) that could have allowed him to legally avoid paying federal income taxes for up to 18 years. [Reportedly](#), his credit takes a significant hit and US banks are now reluctant to lend him money.
 - **1996:** Trump makes a [second trip to Moscow](#), where he registers his trademark for Trump Tower.
 - **1998:** Trump begins borrowing from **Deutsche Bank**. Trump's Taj Mahal repeatedly fails to properly report gamblers who cashed out \$10,000 or more in a single day, according to an [IRS settlement](#). The casino **violated anti-money laundering rules 106 times in its first year and a half of operation** in the early 1990s.

What's the Story with Deutsche Bank?

- 1998: Trump's first loan is for \$125 million, and the cumulative total is reportedly up to [\\$2.5 billion](#) as of 2016.
- 2008: Trump has difficulty making payments on a \$640 million loan – \$40 million of which he guaranteed personally – taken out to finance Trump Tower in Chicago; he [sues the bank for \\$3 billion](#) and the case is ultimately settled.
- 2017: Deutsche Bank [is fined \\$630 million in penalties](#) in connection with a \$10 billion Russian money-laundering scheme.
- 2018: Deutsche Bank is [raided by German police](#) investigating more money laundering. Mueller [subpoenas](#) records from the bank and it's [reported](#) that:
 - o "Trump has liabilities to banks and financial services firms of between \$356.15 million and \$480.35 million, including up to \$175 million to Deutsche Bank U.S. and \$150 million to Ladder Capital, a listed real estate investment trust," and

- “Trump’s outstanding loans were granted at rates between 2 points over and under the matching Treasury-yield benchmark at inception. That’s despite the well-documented record of bankruptcy filings that dot Trump’s history of casino investment.”

2000s

- **2001:** Tefvik Arif, a former Soviet official from Kazakhstan who became an international businessman, founds the [Bayrock Group](#), a real estate development and investment company. Bayrock is headquartered in Trump Tower, New York. This same year, Trump begins going to Bayrock for cash. Ultimately, they put together deals for two projects in Fort Lauderdale, a resort in Phoenix, and Trump SoHo in New York.
- **2003:** Arif [hires](#) Russian mobster Felix Sater as managing director of Bayrock. Sater then becomes Chief Operating Officer, and assists with several projects, including management of the [Trump SoHo project](#).

Who is Felix Sater?

- 1991: Sater [stabs a man in the face and neck](#) during a fight at the El Rio Grande restaurant and bar in New York. He is convicted of first-degree assault.
 - 1998: Sater [pleads guilty](#) to stock racketeering, as one of 19 US and Russian mob-connected traders who participated in a [\\$40 million](#) “pump and dump” securities fraud scheme.
 - 2001: Bayrock is founded by Tefvik Arif.
 - 2006: Donald Trump Jr. and Ivanka [visit Moscow with Felix Sater](#), during which time they “connect with potential partners.”
 - 2008: Sater leaves Bayrock after a [New York Times article](#) reveals his criminal past.
 - 2010: Sater is reportedly [back in Trump Tower](#) as a “senior advisor” to the Trump Organization - at least according to his business card - with his own office in the building.
 - 2018: Sater is [implicated](#), along with Trump’s former attorney/fixer Michael Cohen, in the Trump Tower Moscow deal.
- **2002:** Trump’s partner in the Trump Tower Toronto deal, **Leib Waldman**, [is revealed as a wanted fugitive](#). Waldman fled to Canada from the US “after pleading guilty to bankruptcy fraud and embezzlement in 1995.” He is subsequently extradited to the US and imprisoned.
 - **2004:** Trump Hotels and Casino Resorts files for [Chapter 11 bankruptcy](#), listing a debt of around \$1.8 billion. By this year, according [Bloomberg reports](#) that “a third of units [in Trump World Tower] sold on floors 76 through 83... involved people or limited liability companies connected to Russia and neighboring states.”
 - **2007:** Trump Vodka is [launched](#) at the Moscow Millionaire’s Fair, which Trump attends.
 - **2008:** Russian businessman **Dmitry Rybolovlev** [purchases](#) one of Trump’s mansions in Palm Beach, Florida for \$95 million - \$50 million more than Trump had paid just 4 years earlier. For context, this was during the [steep decline](#) of the US housing market.

- Trump announces a plan to create a [reality TV show in Russia](#), though the deal never comes to fruition.
- Trump Entertainment Resorts Inc. [files for bankruptcy](#), and Trump resigns as chairman of the board.
- Donald Trump Jr. [visits Moscow](#) six times in 18 months. Trump Jr. tells reporters that “Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets [...] we see a lot of money pouring in from Russia.”

2010s

- **2010:** Russian state-owned bank, **Vnesheconombank**, helps [finance](#) the struggling Trump Tower Toronto with an \$850 million stake in a Ukrainian steel mill from the project's developer.
- The **Major Economics Crimes Bureau** of the New York District Attorney's office begins [investigating](#) Ivanka Trump and Donald Trump Jr. over allegations that they misled buyers about the Trump SoHo project. The investigation is later dropped.
- Lenders [foreclose](#) on 200-unit Trump Hollywood condo. Reuters identified 13 units in Trump Hollywood that were purchased by individuals with Russian passports or Russian addresses.
- **2013:** Federal agents bust an “[ultraexclusive, high-stakes, illegal poker ring](#)” run by Russian gangsters out of Trump Tower. In addition to card games, they operated illegal gambling websites, ran a global sports book and laundered more than \$100 million. A condo directly below one owned by Trump reportedly served as HQ of the “sophisticated money-laundering scheme” connected to Semion Mogilevich.
- Trump [Tweets](#) about **Putin** becoming his new best friend soon before he [travels to Moscow](#) for the Miss Universe pageant. While there, Trump [meets with numerous Russian oligarchs](#) to explore possible business ventures in Russia.
- **2015:** Trump officially announces his candidacy for president. Trump's Taj Mahal is [fined \\$10 million](#) - the highest penalty ever levied by the feds against a casino - and they admit to having “**willfully violated**” **anti-money-laundering regulations for years**.
- The Trump Organization [signs a letter of intent](#) for Trump Tower Moscow, including a \$4 million fee for use of his name.
- **2016:** Trump attorney/fixer **Michael Cohen** [contacts the Kremlin](#) asking for help regarding Trump Tower Moscow, and Trump is reportedly aware of this. Discussions continue at least through [June 2016](#), though Cohen lies to Congress about this, reportedly in an attempt to protect Trump. This includes a plan to [give Putin a \\$50 million penthouse](#) in the hopes that it would entice Russian oligarchs to buy up the rest of the units.